1:Opler E 5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

A dignified old man, when he was working out the details of some music, indicated the great difference between the social dance songs and the ceremonial songs:

I want you to keep these [girl's puberty rite] songs private. I am not a foolish man and do not sing these songs easily. Some of the Indians might not like it. But the social dance songs are all right. I don't care what you do about them.

This is the way two composers of social dance songs went about their task:

Y. and I made up a couple of these songs. We worked them out together. I went over to his place, and we patched them up. First he'd sing a little and then I'd sing a little, and we'd agree on it and work it out. We practiced. Then we sang them at the last girl's puberty rite. All the people liked them. The word part of one goes like this:

Young woman, young woman,
We've been very intimate,
But now stay away from me.

Another composer sang his own song and some others from which he had drawn his inspiration:

I took some old songs and chose a little from one and a little from another. I used about three and worked one new song out of them. I did it while I was away on a trip. Then I sang this song at the ceremony when I came back. At the last ceremony I sang it for four nights straight. All the people said it was a good song.

But by no means are all these songs recent compositions or modifications. Many old favorites continue to be as popular as ever:

Some of the songs for this are very old. I'll sing one for you. It's very old; perhaps two hundred years old. When I was just a little boy at Fort Apache fifty years ago, just old enough to listen to singing, I heard it. There was one very old man who sat by a fire working on arrows and singing it. And while he sang it he was crying. This song reminded him of the times when he was a young man. That's why I think it is so old. It goes like this:

Young woman, you are thinking of something,
Young woman, you are thinking of something;
You are thinking of what you are going to get:
That man of whom you are thinking is worthless!

This comment suggests one of the greatest appeals of the social dance songs—their associations. The occasions when they have been heard and learned are memorable points in the individual career—moments of travel, adventure, and courtship:

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533 This is the song to which my wife and I fell in love. It's not much of a song;
211 but I thought a lot of it and so did she. N. was singing it. It is his morning song.
881 I went out with her under the piñon trees and I sang this song to her during the days of the feast. I've had this song for my favorite ever since. It reminds my wife and me of that time.

881 The few words of a social dance song are rich in implication.
533 Once an old man dismissed American songs with a contemptu-
[186] ous, "There isn't much singing to them; it's all words!" Doubtless he was thinking of the more subtle technique of his people, by which, with a few well-chosen words and a wealth of inner meaning, a dozen youths can be made to hang their heads.

881 As soon as the masked dancers have departed for the night,
535 the first of the social dances—the round dance—begins. Several
533 men holding pottery drums come together. Others form a compact knot around them, and this group, their arms around each other's shoulders, circles the fire clockwise. One man, ordinarily one of the drummers, begins a song, and the others join in. Now women step out and stand at the side of the singers, forming a circle. Sometimes the circle incloses the singers. The dancers face the fire and shuffle sideways, clockwise, in time to the music.

In the round-dance songs such words as "Stoop," or "Faster," may be the only words, and the dancers are expected to follow
881 these commands. Others may contain only a short phrase or two,
533 but these few words satirize common foibles and provoke general amusement. In a certain round-dance song one question is simply repeated over and over:

[539] What belongs to us?

This seems enigmatic to an outsider, but it is fraught with meaning to the dancers:

This is a round-dance song. "What belongs to us?" Where are our possessions? We haven't got anything. That is what this song means. Many people get married but haven't anything. What is going to be ours when we get married? Suppose I am dancing. I want to marry a girl though I have nothing. Then I'll be ashamed when they sing this, as lots of boys are.

Another of these songs derides the marriage of a young girl to an ill-favored old man:

[539] She married an old man
With big buttocks!

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726 202 177 We used a mirror. Quivering a beam toward strangers and then casting out a long beam from you means, "Who are you?" The others reply, "A friend," by directing the beam toward themselves and then in a circle toward you. Flashing downward with the beam means, "Come." Flashing to the right means, "Go right," to the left means, "Go left."

726 821 One of the chief benefits of star lore, apparently, is to help raiders or warriors find their way about:

I can't tell you much about the stars. I never paid much attention to it. But you take a man like L.: he's been out at war many times. He has had to go by the stars. He knows all about them and what direction they are moving in.

726 805 211 Timekeeping devices are important to the warriors and to those awaiting their return:

Suppose you had promised someone to be somewhere in a certain number of days. You'd have to start at the right time to get there. So every morning you would throw a stone in a certain place and keep count of them. In this way you would know when to start. Or you might do it with marks on a stick. I have heard of doing it with beads on a string too. A few, maybe one or two out of the whole tribe, kept time by beads.

726 271 When a war or raiding party scatters, some individuals may lose their way, and they are likely to suffer from lack of water. Certain aids are therefore taught to everyone:

We are taught, when thirsty and without water, to put a dry stick or stone in the mouth. I have done it lots of times. It starts the saliva and helps you. We melt snow for water when we find some in the mountains. Different kinds of [824] cactus are used when we are in the flats. We chew the inner parts of the cactus for thirst. No matter how hot the weather is, that is always cool. Barrel cactus saved many people too. To get the water you knock the top off. There is water in there; it's like a watermelon. To get the water, you have to squeeze the pulp. And we get rain water from mescal. This plant holds water [in the basal leaves]. The animals get water from these. The deer and horses drink from them. In the south the big ones grow. To drink, the man uses a reed or something hollow if he has it and sucks it out.

726 291 [824] In emergencies, improvised footgear must sometimes be made. "When the Chiricahua were caught out on the raid or at war and their moccasins gave out, they took grass and tied it to their feet with two or three strips of yucca."

726 157 The warrior has little respect for a senseless sacrifice of life, but when he is brought to bay he is capable of furious resistance: